

Amendments to the Claims: This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A spinal gauge block and tool assembly for determining the distance between two adjacent walls on two adjacent vertebrae for the implant of a disc, comprising:

a spinal gauge block having a tapered configuration formed by a top surface and a bottom surface for respectively contacting the two adjacent walls and with said top surface and said bottom surface respectively extending along two planes which are spaced apart and angled with respect to each other to thereby be non-parallel planes,

said gauge block having a side surface intermediate said top and bottom surfaces with a first dimension and a second dimension respectively directly between said top and bottom surfaces and with said first dimension being greater than said second dimension and with said dimensions being located in diametrical opposed positions on said gauge block and thereby be located in conformance with the tapered configuration,

indicia on said gauge block marking the location of said greater dimension, wherein said indicia is a line extending between the locations of said first dimension and said second dimension.

said side surface having two holes extending therethrough and into said gauge block and with said holes having respective central axes with one of said axes aligned with said indicia and the other of said axes being axially angulated relative to said indicia, and

a tool having an elongated axis and connectable to said gauge block through a selected one of said holes to thereby provide for two different angulated approaches to the two adjacent vertebrae and relative to said tool elongated axis.

2. (Currently Amended) The spinal gauge block and tool assembly as claimed in claim 1, wherein:

said ~~indicia~~ ~~is a~~ line extending between the locations of said first dimension and said second dimension comprises an arrow head.

3. (Original) The spinal gauge block and tool assembly as claimed in claim 1, wherein:

said holes are threaded holes for alternate screw-reception of said tool.

4. (Original) The spinal gauge block and tool assembly as claimed in claim 3, including:

a non-rotation connection between said gauge block and said tool for restraining rotation of said gauge block about said axis of said tool.

5. (Original) The spinal gauge block and tool assembly as claimed in claim 4, wherein:

said non-rotation is a tongue-and-groove connection for self-engagement upon screwing said tool into either selected one of said holes.

6. (Original) The spinal gauge block and tool assembly as claimed in claim 3, including:

said tool having a sleeve portion and a rotatable threaded portion in said sleeve portion for threaded engagement of said gauge block with said tool, and markings along said tool for determining the depth of penetration of said tool into the patient's body.

7. (Currently Amended) A spinal gauge block and tool assembly for determining the distance between two adjacent walls on two adjacent vertebrae in preparation for implanting a spine-supporting disc between the two vertebrae, comprising:

a spinal gauge block having a tapered configuration extending along a plane and having a first side and a second side spaced apart along said plane and with said sides having respective heights and with said height of said first side being greater than said height of second side to thereby present the tapered configuration,

indicia on said gauge block marking the location of said height of said first side, wherein said indicia is a line extending directly between the locations of said heights of said sides.

said first side having two holes with respective central axes and extending into said gauge block and with one of said two holes being axially aligned with said indicia and the other of said two holes being axially angulated relative to said indicia, and

a tool for positioning said gauge block between the two adjacent walls of the two adjacent vertebrae and said tool having an elongated axis and being connectable to said gauge block through a selected one of said two holes to thereby provide for two different angles of approach of said tool elongated axis toward the two adjacent vertebrae and, with the connection of said tool in either one of said two holes, said second side of said gauge block is presented in a leading position of movement toward the vertebrae relative to the remainder of said block and relative to said first side to thereby be pushed to a position between the two adjacent walls on the two adjacent vertebrae before the movement of said first side therebetween.

8. (Currently Amended) The spinal gauge block and tool assembly as claimed in claim 7, wherein:

said ~~indicia~~ is a line extending directly between the locations of said heights of said sides comprises an arrow head.

9. (Original) The spinal gauge block and tool assembly as claimed in claim 7, wherein:

said holes are threaded for alternate screw-reception of said tool and relatively angled approximately ten degrees.

10. (Original) The spinal gauge block and tool assembly as claimed in claim 9, including:

a non-rotation connection between said gauge block and said tool for restraining rotation of said gauge block about said axis of said tool.

11. (Original) The spinal gauge block and tool assembly as claimed in claim 10, wherein:

said non-rotation connection is a tongue-and groove connection for self-engagement upon screwing said tool into either selected one of said two holes.

12. (Original) The spinal gauge block and tool assembly as claimed in claim 11, including:

said tool having a sleeve portion and a rotatable threaded portion in said sleeve portion for threaded engagement of said tool with said gauge block.

13. (Currently Amended) The spinal gauge block and tool assembly as claimed in claim 12, including:

a plurality of said gauge blocks of sizes different from each other for determining the distance between the two adjacent walls and being cylindrical in shape, and

said tool being a single one adapted to individually connect with all of said ~~gauges~~ gauge blocks.